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FOR S/CT AND NEA/IPA

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SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN PRIME MINISTER HANIYA VISITS SUDAN

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASON: 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (U) Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniya briefed Sudan's President and current Arab League Chairman Omar al Bashir on the Authority's current financial situation on December 12, as part of a tour to key supporters in the region. Haniya told reporters afterwards in Khartoum that Bashir had pledged to persuade other Arab leaders to fulfill financial commitments they made in March at the Arab League summit.

¶2. (U) Haniya also met with other senior National Congress Party (NCP) officials, including Deputy NCP Chairman and Assistant to the President Nafie Ali Nafie. According to press reports, Haniya suggested that Hamas could benefit from the NCP's political experience, and vowed to work together on issues like Darfur, Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon. Nafie reiterated Sudan's rejection of the "Zionist siege" on the Palestinian people.

¶3. (C) Comment: While the NCP has publicly tried to distance itself from support for Hamas -- Sudan pointedly did not match the USD 250 million that Iran pledged during Haniya's stop in Tehran -- backroom financial ties between the NCP and Hamas remain strong. Though the Government has officially closed Hamas' office and bakery in Khartoum, according to rumors in the capital, the NCP still acts as a front for Hamas' investments in Sudan and abroad. End Comment.
HUME